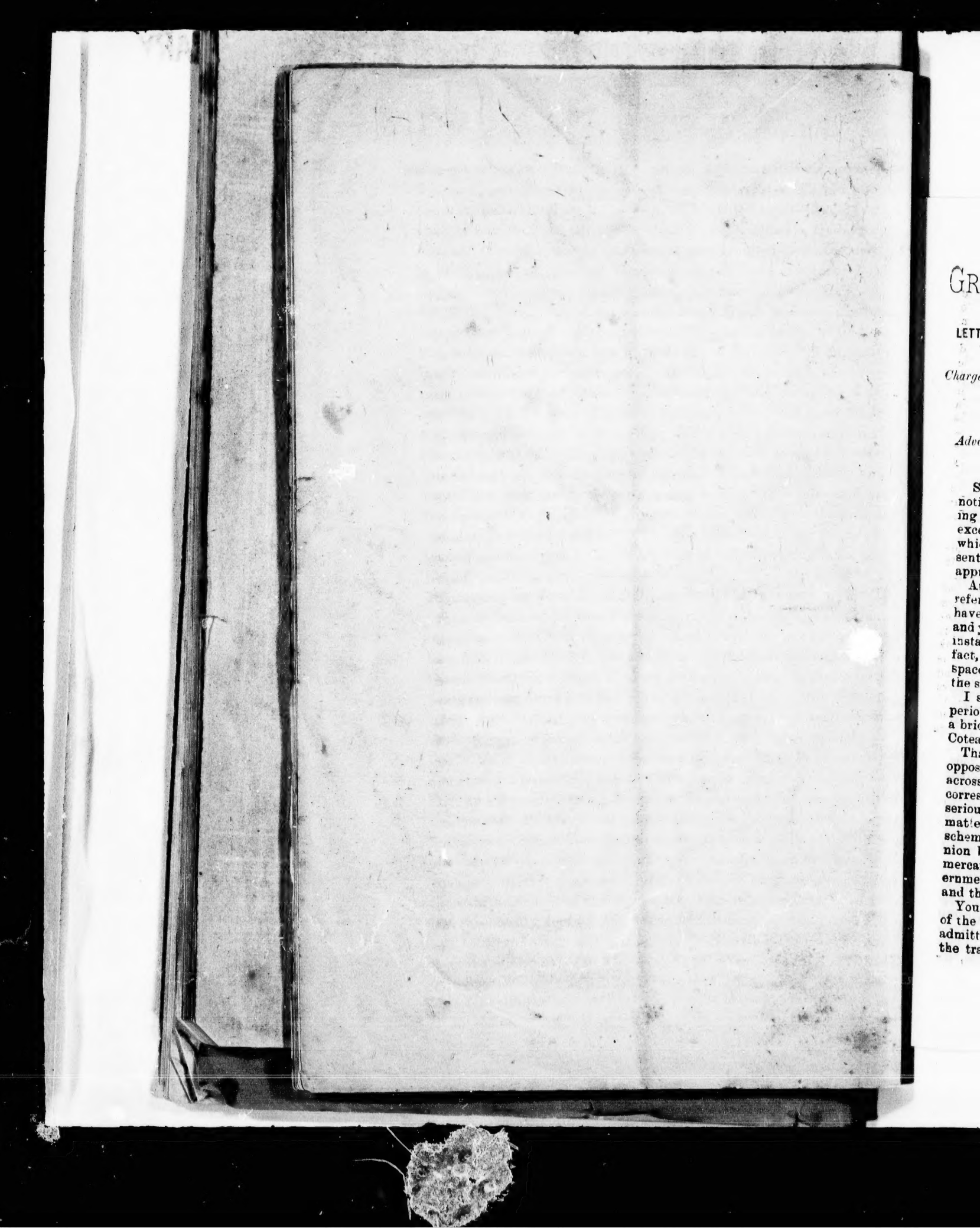

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

LETTER ADDRESSED to the "MONTREAL WITNESS,"

IN REFERENCE TO

Charges made in that Paper of Monopoly by the Grand Trunk, and Injury to Montreal Interests,

AND THE

Advocacy by "The Witness" of Competing Lines.

SIR,—It is not my custom to take official notice of newspaper articles upon the working or policy of the Grand Trunk Railway, except in so far as that may be necessary, which is not often, to correct misrepresentation, generally unintentional, or misapprehension.

Articles in the Montreal *Witness* having reference to the affairs of the Company, have recently however been so numerous, and you must pardon me for saying in most instances so seriously astray in matters of fact, that I have to ask you to give me space in your journal to refer to some of the statements made.

I shall not go further back than the period when the agitation in reference to a bridge across the St. Lawrence River at Coteau recently commenced.

That the Grand Trunk Company have opposed the project for putting a bridge across the river at this place, you and your correspondents seem to look upon as a serious offence, and it further seems to be a matter for objection that, in reference to the scheme, there has been unanimity of opinion between the representatives of the mercantile bodies of the city, the city Government, the Government of the Province and the Company.

You have encouraged the construction of the bridge, at the same time you have admitted that it would "deflect" a part of the trade of this city, only to be regained

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by the construction of a second bridge across the river within the boundaries of Montreal, or near thereto.

In opposing the Coteau scheme the Grand Trunk Company have done so, I trust, in a legitimate and straightforward manner, and I think you will not be inclined to dispute that they have the same right to protect their own interests as belong to any other corporation or any citizen within the bounds of the Dominion.

When you refer to opposition to the Coteau Railway Bridge as opposition to the people of Glengarry being permitted to have ingress and egress to and from markets of their own choosing, I may venture to think that you entirely misapprehend the situation. There has been no opposition, so far as I know, either by the Grand Trunk Railway Company or any of the other bodies to whom you have referred to the construction of the Montreal & City of Ottawa Junction Railway, and by that Railway the people of Glengarry could as efficiently and cheaply reach any of the markets which are available to them as they could by means of the Railway proposed to be constructed to Rouse's Point, or to the neighbouring town of St. Johns.

So far from the Grand Trunk Company being opposed to the wishes of the people of Glengarry to have railway communication through their district, I am in a position to say that they have always looked upon this project with particular favour, have been willing to aid it to any extent within their power, and I believe that the aid which they have offered in the past to give to the scheme is quite equal to any which has been promised by the American Railway Companies who are advocating the construction of the Coteau Bridge.

It has appeared to me, and I am not singular in thinking so, that you have been mainly influenced in advocating the construction of this bridge because it is part of a scheme opposed to the Grand Trunk Railway. I am led to this conclusion because I cannot suppose, in-

terested as you are in the prosperity and welfare of Montreal, that you would desire to see a portion of the trade of the city diverted, as you predict it would be by the construction of a bridge at Coteau, into other channels.

You are now advocating the building of another bridge across the St. Lawrence near this city, and, in referring to your advocacy of it, I desire to be understood as in no way attacking the plans of those who are interested in its construction. But I may be permitted to doubt if the interests of the city of Montreal will be promoted by the contribution of a large sum of money for such a purpose under existing circumstances.

You express the opinion that Montreal has never realized fully the advantages of her position, and that this is owing largely to the fact that she only possesses one line of railway communication East and West.

It is not my business to discuss the question whether Montreal has realized the advantages of her position or not, but I would point out to you that in stating she has only one line of railway communication, you make a mistake.

Within fifty miles of the Victoria Bridge, on the South, there are no less than three lines of communication, the traffic of all of which finds its way to and from Montreal over the Victoria Bridge on terms which are satisfactory to the Companies interested

One of these Companies is a direct competitor with the Grand Trunk to the East; yet, notwithstanding this, their traffic has been carried to and from Montreal for years past on terms of which those who manage that Railway have not thought it necessary to complain.

The business of the Delaware & Hudson Company is likewise taken to and from Montreal across the Victoria Bridge.

The business of the South-Eastern Company was, until quite recently, so carried, and if the arrangement was not continued,

it was not owing to any action taken by the Grand Trunk Company.

The business of the Passumpsic Company brought over the South-Eastern Line was also, until quite recently, run to and from Montreal in precisely the same way as the business of the South-Eastern Company.

No Railway Company, east or south-east of the St. Lawrence River, desiring ingress and egress for their business to and from Montreal, has been denied facilities by the Grank Trunk Company. It is quite true that with one Company whose line has only recently been opened through for traffic, we have not been able to agree on the scale of charges to be paid for the accommodation which they seek to obtain from this Company.

To the disputes which have taken place about the Montreal Portland and Boston Railway I need not refer. That line is at present supposed to be under the control of the Passumpsic Railway Company, although that control appears, even now, to be a matter of controversy.

The Grand Trunk Company have been quite willing for months past to make an arrangement for the business of the Montreal, Portland and Boston Company, and you appear to have come to the conclusion that because there has been disagreement as to the payments to be made, the demands of the Grand Trunk Company are exorbitant, and that the desire is to prevent a Company, which may be in some way or other a competitor, obtaining access to this city.

I ask you if in coming to this conclusion without making any enquiry from the other interest involved, you are doing justice to yourself or to the Grand Trunk Company?

I do not for a moment question your desire to fairly represent this or any other matter upon which you write, but impartial observers will conclude that it ought to have occurred to you that those who control the affairs of the Grand Trunk Railway might fairly be supposed to be as

well informed as to what are fair and proper charges for the passage of traffic over the Victoria Bridge and its transportaion—which is also sought for—over a most expensive piece of railway—expensive both as regards its original cost and the cost of working it—between the bridge and the terminus in this city.

You do not, either, seem to be aware that the parties desire also to make use of the terminal facilities of this Company, terminal facilities which, I may mention, are somewhat confined and can only be enlarged at very considerable cost.

You have spoken of the tolls demanded by the Grand Trunk Company from the Montreal Portland & Boston Company as being $25 a car, which is incorrect. The Grand Trunk Company have been quite willing to haul the cars of the Montreal Portland & Boston Company and their connections to and from the Bonaventure station and St. Lambert's at a very much lower rate, less I may say than one-third.

It is not, however, my purpose to discuss in your columns a question which is purely a matter of business between the parties interested.

I may, however, perhaps be permitted to mention that the St. Louis Bridge Company, whose bridge proper is 1,800 feet long, and with the tracks at each end measures a total distance of only three miles, make the following charges for the passage of traffic :—

General Merchandise, of all classes, except as below.	5c. per 100 lbs.
Coffee, Sugar, Molasses, and Jute.....	4c. per 100 lbs.
All fourth-class freight eastbound	4c. per 100 lbs.
Baskets, empty, Fish kits, Feathers, Willow-ware Hives and all extra bulky and light articles in car loads, estimated at 20,000 lbs.....	5c. per 100 lbs.
Above articles in quantities less than car loads.....	10c. per 100 lbs.

You are aware, no doubt, that the distance from St Lambert's into Bonaventure Station is *seven miles.*

You mention also the tolls on the International Bridge as being $2 a car. Your figures are again incorrect, but if they were correct you must allow me to point out that the International Bridge Company owns besides the bridge nothing but a very short approach of a few yards at each end of it, and that their charges are almost wholly for the use of the Bridge structure, which cost little more than a fourth of the amount expended on the Victoria Bridge, not taking into account the five miles of railway over which the traffic of the M ntreal Portland & Boston Company would be hauled, in addition to its passage across the Bridge, and the terminal accommodation afforded in this city.

In some of your articles you have spoken of the interests of Montreal being injured by the Grand Trunk Company, and this city being treated as no hing more than a "lucrative way station."

It is singular that whilst you write in this sense, a portion of the press of the next largest city in the Dominion complain that the interests of that city are sacrificed by the Grand Trunk Company in the promotion of the interests of Montreal.

It is probable that if you had a larger experience on the subject, you would know how utterly impossible it is for a Railway Company, owning a line the length of the Grand Trunk, to so arrange its tariff as to give entire satisfaction to every district.

I unhesitatingly assert that there is no city on this Continent which has been better served by any Railway Company, either in the service offered or in the rates charged for years past, or whose general prosperity has been more largely promoted by railway enterprize, than has the city of Montreal.

It has been the constant aim of the Company to develope the business of this city, and to aid by its arrangements in

building up a large European trade to and from the St. Lawrence.

In adopting that policy, of course those who have controlled the Company's affairs believed they were also promoting the welfare of the Company.

If Montreal has been treated as a "lucrative way station," I can assure you that there are many other places in the Dominion which would be glad to be treated in a similar manner.

The Grand Trunk Company is the largest employer in this city; I believe I am justified in saying that they are the largest contributors to the revenue of the city; they are the largest purchasers of material in the city, and probably when you charge the Grand Trunk Company, as you so frequently do, with injuring the interests of Montreal, you are not aware of the fact that for every dollar which the Company collects in the city it spends within its limits, on an average, more than two.

I ask you if you think that any other Railway Company likely to construct a railway into Montreal, will ever contribute as largely to the welfare of the city as the Grand Trunk Company have done in the past and do to-day. I can assure you that I only state what is a fact when I say that there are many other cities within the Dominion where the workshops of the Grand Trunk Company could be with equal convenience located, and the citizens of which would be glad to grant large subsidies in aid of the establishment of these works within their boundaries.

I need not point out to you that your statement that there is only one railway to the West is also inaccurate, inasmuch as the Government Railway is now running to Ottawa.

You informed your readers, in one of your recent articles, that the Government of Quebec favour the construction of the proposed new bridge across the river here. If this statement be correct no doubt the Government have their own reasons for

doing so; but I may mention to you the fact that the Grand Trunk Company have been willing to make arrangements for an exchange of traffic between their line and the Quebec Government Railways, and that just so soon as the control of the line was assumed by the Government, I offered, with the sanction of the Directors, to enter into such arrangements as would ensure a free exchange of traffic between those lines and the Grand Trunk Railway, not excepting such facilities as would enable the Government lines to forward traffic freely to every place east and south of the Victoria Bridge, an offer which will, I have no doubt, in due time receive the consideration of the energetic Premier of the Province.

I may perhaps also be permitted, in closing this letter, to refer to statements which have been made and are now actively circulated, as to the quantity of traffic passed over the Victoria Bridge being equal to its full capacity. This statement is best answered by pointing out that over other portions of the Grand Trunk line where only a single track exists (as is the case on the Victoria Bridge) and where the facilities for crossing trains are not by any means so great, forty per cent. more trains are passed in the twenty-four hours than pass over the Victoria Bridge in the ordinary course of business.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HICKSON,

General Manager.

Montreal, April 16, 1879.

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